THE

WRONGS OF AFRICA,

A POEM.

PART THE FIRST.

SED POSTQUAM TELLUS SCELERE EST IMBUTA NEFANDO,
JUSTITIAMQUE OMNES CUPIDA DE MENTE FUGARUNT,
PERFUDERE MANUS FRATERNO SANGUINE FRATRES.

CATULLUS.

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PREFACE.

IT muſt afford pleaſure to every benevolent mind to obſerve, that the progreſs of knowledge, while it improves the underſtanding, leads to the eſtabliſhment of virtue, freedom, and happineſs. A great æra is opening on the earth; diſcoveries in ſcience are very rapidly increaſing the power, amending the condition, and enlarging the views of mankind; and the cloſe of the eighteenth, like that of the fifteenth century, will probably be marked in future times, as a period in which a ſudden acceſſion of light burſt on the human mind. Happily thoſe important truths which are the reſult of reaſon and reflection, are no longer confined to

the receſſes of philoſophy; they have ſpread widely into ſociety, and begin to influence the councils of ſtateſmen, and the conduct of nations.

Hence it is not improbable, that the principles of political ſcience may ſoon undergo an univerſal change; that probity and good faith may take place of fraud and chicanery in the intercourſe of ſtates; contiguity of ſituation prove the ſource of friendſhip inſtead of hoſtility between nations; and hatred and bloodſhed be exchanged for confidence and peace. Such muſt be the conſequences, when the laws of truth and juſtice, which are impoſed on the tranſactions of individuals, ſhall be extended to the conduct of governments towards each other, where kingdoms are at ſtake, and the happineſs of millions involved in the iſſue.

But though many agreeable effects will moſt probably flow from this important change, there are other conſequences that may enſue, which are greatly

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to be dreaded. The ſpirit of trade may degrade the national character, and endanger our ſacrificing the principles of juſtice and the feelings of humanity to the acquirement of wealth. It becomes us therefore to guard againſt the introduction of thoſe baſe and ſordid maxims which repreſent every thing as fair that is lucrative, and ſeparate infamy from villany, provided it be ſucceſsful.

Britain has been highly favoured of heaven in all the gifts of nature and the acquiſitions of art; and the temple of Liberty, firſt reared by the labour, and cemented by the blood, of our anceſtors, has now its foundations eternally fixed on the baſis of ſcience and philoſophy. But the principles on which the liberties of Britain are eſtabliſhed, are of univerſal application, and may one day extend from the centre of this iſland to the extremities of the earth.

It is time for thoſe who direct the councils of the nation to turn their eyes on the trade to Africa.—

This traffic in the human ſpecies, which is ſo direct and daring an infringement of every principle of liberty and juſtice, has attracted the public notice—The more it is examined, the more horrid it will appear; and the voice of reaſon, aided by the natural feelings of the human heart, muſt ſooner or later atchieve its overthrow. But it becomes a wiſe legiſlature to interfere without delay; the ſubject is of deep importance, and calls loudly for the immediate exertions of patriotiſm and virtue. It would be no difficult matter to ſhew, that the trade which the Europeans carry on for ſlaves to Guinea, is the foundation of almoſt all the miſeries which the negroes endure in their own country, as well as in the ſugar iſlands. Thoſe dreadful wars which ſpread from the ſhores of the Atlantic to the eaſtern extremity of Africa, are chiefly undertaken to procure ſlaves as an exchange for the wares of Europe. It is this trade, which ſetting juſtice and humanity at defiance, crowds the unhappy Africans in the foul and peſtilential holds of ſhips,

where

where twenty-five thouſand periſh annually of diſeaſe and broken hearts. It is this traffic which places the ſurvivors in the hands of maſters whoſe natural feelings are deſtroyed by early and continual intercourſe with the worſt of ſlavery, where their ſpirits are broken and their bodies waſted by inſupportable toils. Laſtly, it is this trade which deprives them of thoſe beſt privileges of our nature, conjugal affection and parental love, the conſtant ſupply which it affords compenſating the loſs of thoſe victims of avarice and cruelty who have died without iſſue to inherit their miſery and their diſgrace.—Hence it is, that the waſte of life among a people naturally prolific in the extreme, amounts to an eighth part annually; and upwards of an hundred thouſand Africans are yearly tranſported acroſs the Atlantic, to keep up the number of thoſe unhappy men who are doomed to toil, to ſlavery, and to death.

This mournful truth, while it confutes a thouſand arguments drawn by the wretched apologiſts

of ſlavery, from the happy condition of the negroes in the Weſt-India iſlands, ſuggeſts other reflections, at which humanity ſhudders.—It is the intereſt of the merchants of England, that the condition of the negroes in the colonies ſhould not be meliorated, for otherwiſe they might multiply in ſuch a manner as to deſtroy the demand; while on the other hand the planters who can now buy a full-grown African cheaper than they can rear a child from birth till the age of labour, are thus, in the treatment of their ſlaves, freed from thoſe reſtraints which intereſt impoſes on the moſt mercileſs. Thus it is, that theſe two ſpecies of Chriſtians find their account in the ſufferings of the injured Africans; and who after this can wonder that their general treatment is cruel and ſevere?

That repreſentations ſuch as theſe ſhould have no influence in a country where men have heads to reaſon and hearts to feel, is impoſſible; and before long it is hoped they will have a powerful effect in the ſenate of

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the nation. A partial attachment to the errors of their country, cannot be alledged againſt the politicians of the preſent day; nor is it eaſy to ſee how the traffic in the human ſpecies, can be overlooked by thoſe among them who have any pretenſions to patriotiſm or humanity—Nor how thoſe adherents of liberty, who ſo lately fought the battles of America, when Britain attempted to retain her authority over the colonies ſhe had formed, can view unmoved the real enormities ſhe is daily perpetrating in another quarter of the globe.

Though the author of the following poem has ſpoken of the ſlave trade with the abhorrence which it deſerves, he would not be thought to involve all who are concerned in it in the charge of deliberate wickedneſs. The combined influence of cuſtom, of prejudice, and of intereſt, has, he knows, in all ages afforded melancholy inſtances, not only of the corruption of the heart, but of the perverſion of the underſtanding; and to this laſt circumſtance he is willing to impute it, that there are Engliſh-

men

men deeply engaged in the traffic in the human ſpecies (incredible as it may appear) who are, in other reſpects, men of honour and integrity; and even, as he has been told, of humanity—Such inſtances are deeply to be deplored.

Feeling for the honour of his country, and for the ſufferings of the friendleſs and injured negroes, the author has attempted to attract public notice to the ſlave trade, by committing his thoughts to the preſs in the form of a poem. That which he now offers is the firſt part of his plan; if this meets attention, it will be continued. It may be thought that he has been warm, and he will not deny it—This however he may ſay, that he has not uſed the licence of a poet to deal in fiction—It is with heart-felt ſorrow he declares, that on this ſubject the truth defies the exaggeration of paſſion, or the embelliſhments of imagination.

THE

WRONGS of AFRICA.

PART THE FIRST.

OFFSPRING of love divine, Humanity!
To whom, his eldeſt born, th' Eternal gave
Dominion o'er the heart; and taught to touch
Its varied ſtops in ſweeteſt uniſon;
And ſtrike the ſtring that from a kindred breaſt
Reſponſive vibrates! from the noiſy haunts

Of mercantile confuſion, where thy voice
Is heard not; from the meretricious glare
Of crowded theatres, where in thy place
Sits Senſibility, with wat'ry eye,
Dropping o'er fancied woes her uſeleſs tear;
Come thou, and weep with me ſubſtantial ills;
And execrate the wrongs, that Afric's ſons,
Torn from their natal ſhore, and doom'd to bear
The yoke of ſervitude in weſtern climes,
Suſtain. Nor vainly let our ſorrows flow,
Nor let the ſtrong emotion riſe in vain,
But may the kind contagion widely ſpread,
Till in its flame the unrelenting heart
Of Avarice, melt in ſofteſt ſympathy;—
And one bright blaze of univerſal love,
In grateful incenſe, riſes up to heaven.

Form'd with the ſame capacity of pain,
The ſame deſire of pleaſure and of eaſe,
Why feels not man for man? When nature ſhrinks

From the ſlight puncture of an inſect's ſting,
Faints if not ſcreen'd from ſultry ſuns, and pines
Beneath the hardſhip of an hour's delay
Of needful nutriment; when liberty
Is priz'd ſo dearly, that the ſlighteſt breath
That ruffles but her mantle, can awake
To arms, unwarlike nations, and can rouſe
Confederate ſtates to vindicate her claims;
How ſhall the ſufferer man, his fellow doom
To ills he mourns, or ſpurns at? tear with ſtripes
His quivering fleſh; with hunger and with thirſt
Waſte his emaciate frame? in ceaſeleſs toils
Exhauſt his vital powers; and bind his limbs
In galling chains? Shall he whoſe fragile form
Demands continual bleſſings, to ſupport
Its complicated texture; air, and food,
Raiment, alternate reſt, and kindly ſkies,
And healthful ſeaſons, dare with impious voice
To aſk thoſe mercies, whilſt his ſelfiſh aim
Arreſts the general freedom of their courſe?

And

And gratified beyond his utmoſt wiſh,
Debars another from the bounteous ſhore?

From her exhauſtleſs ſprings the fruitful earth
The wants of all ſupplies: her children we,
From her full veins the grateful juices draw,
With life and health replete; nor hard return
She at our hands requires, nor more than ſuits
The ends of health and pleaſure; yet beſtows
On all her offspring with a parent's love
Her gifts impartial: of the ſelf-ſame frame,
Alike in paſſions, appetites, and powers,
We ſeize the boon her equal care extends,
But whilſt we graſp it, turn an eye unbleſt
Upon a brother's birth-right; nor deſiſt
With hands unhallow'd, till by fraud or force
We call his portion ours; nor ſtop we here,
But bid the plunder'd wretch again return,
And ſupplicate again with toil, and tears,
The general mother; and as ſhe beſtows,

Again

Again we tear the morſel from his hands;
An uſeleſs booty! whilſt the ſufferer droops
Beneath reiterated wrongs, and dies.

But thou, the maſter of the ſable crew!
Lord of their lives and ruler of their fate,
For whom they toil and bleed! what powers unknown
Of keen enjoyment can thy nature boaſt,
That thus thy ſingle bliſs can graſp the ſum
Of hapleſs numbers, ſacrificed to thee?
—Say, can their tears delight thee? Can their groans
Add poignance to thy pleaſures? Or when death
Alarms thee with his ſummons, canſt thou add
The total of their raviſh'd lives to thine?
Or ſpring not rather thy deteſted joys,
From ſome perverſion of each nobler ſenſe
Indulgent nature gave thee? For the glow
Of melting charity, that looks on all
With eyes impartial; and receives delight
Moſt exquiſite, whene'er her ready aid

Diffuſes gladneſs, or repreſſes pain,
Thro' the minuteſt particle of life;
Feels not thine harden'd breaſt a horrid bliſs
In the wild ſhriek of anguiſh? in the groan
Of ſpeechleſs miſery? Hence with tyrant voice
Thou bidſt the trembling victim to thy wrath
Devoted, writhe beneath the torturing whip,
Or for ſome trivial fault, (to which compar'd
The daily crime, which thou without remorſe
Committ'ſt againſt him, is as oceans depth,
To the ſhoal current of the ſcantieſt rill)
To mutilation doom'ſt him, and to death.
—Dear to the heart is freedom's generous flame,
And dear th' exulting glow, that warms the ſoul,
When ſtruggling virtue from the tyrant's graſp
Indignant ruſhes, and aſſerts her rights;
But for this nameleſs tranſport, thou haſt found
A gloomy ſubſtitute, and from the depths
Of loathſome dungeons, manacles, and chains,
Canſt draw ſtrange pleaſure, and prepoſterous joy.

And

And thou th' inferior miniſter of ill!
Inferior in degree, but in thy ſcorn
Of every milder virtue, in the love
Of rapine, and the quenchleſs thirſt of gold
His more than equal! O'er th' Atlantic deep,
That rolls in vain to ſcreen its eaſtern ſhores
From thy fierce purpoſe, on thou plough'ſt thy way;
And firm, and fearleſs, as thy voyage were meant
On meſſages of mercy, ſeeſt unmov'd
The lightnings glare, and hear'ſt the thunders roll,
Regardleſs of their threats; when o'er the main,
Rides in dread ſtate the equinoctial blaſt,
And ſwells th' inſulted ocean, when thy bark
(The thin partition 'twixt thy fate and thee)
Labours thro' all her frame, and loudly threats
Thine inſtantaneous doom; thou ſtill preſerv'ſt
Thine execrable aim; nor ſtorms, nor fire,
Nor fell diſeaſes, nor impending death,
Arreſt thy purpoſe; till the diſtant ſhores
Of hapleſs Afric open on thy ſight.

From northern Gambia, to the ſouthern climes
Of ſad ANGOLA, lie the fated lands,
Whoſe genius mourns thy coming: wak'd by him,
In vain the elemental fury rag'd,
For thou haſt triumph'd: joyful on the ſtrand,
His ſable ſons receive thy wearied crew;
And bid them ſhare their vegetable ſtore,
Pow'rful to purify the tainted blood,
And grateful to the palate, long inur'd
To nutriment half putrid: in return,
Thou to their dazzled ſight diſcloſeſt wide
Thy magazine of wonders, cull'd with care,
From all the ſplendid trifles, that adorn
Thine own luxurious region; mimic gems
That emulate the true; fictitious gold
To various uſes faſhion'd, pointing out
Wants which before they knew not; mirrors bright,
Reflecting to their quick and curious eye
Their ſable features; ſhells, and beads, and rings,
And all fantaſtic folly's gingling bells,

That

That catch'd th' unpractis'd ear, and thence convey
Their unsuspected poison to the mind.

Yet not delightless pass'd their cloudless days.
The cheerful natives, ere the wasteful rage
Of European avarice chang'd the scene;
—Strangers alike to luxury and toil,
They, with assiduous labour, never woo'd
A coy and stubborn soil, that gave its fruits
Reluctant; but on some devoted day,
Perform'd the task, that for their future lives
Suffic'd, and to the moist and vigorous earth
The youthful shoots committed: fervid suns,
And plenteous showers, the rising juices sent
Thro' all the turgid branches; and ere long,
Screen'd from the scorching beam, beneath the shade
Himself had rais'd, the careless planter sat;
And from the bending branches crop't the fruit;
More grateful to his unperverted taste,
Than all that glads the glutton's pamper'd meal.

Nor was amuſement wanting; oft at morn,
Lord of his time, the healthful native roſe,
And ſeiz'd his faithful bow, and took his way
Midſt tangled woods, or over diſtant plains,
To pierce the murd'rous Pard; when glowing noon
Pour'd its meridian fervors, in cool ſhades
He ſlept away th' uncounted hours, till eve
Recall'd him home; then midſt the village train
He join'd the mazy dance; then all his pow'rs
Were wak'd to action; vigorous and alert,
He bounded o'er the plain; or in due time
Plied his unwearied feet, and beat his hands;
Whilſt burſts of laughter, and loud ſhouts of joy
Spoke the keen pleaſures of th' admiring throng.

But when the active labours of the chace
No more delighted, in the ſhady bower
Idly induſtrious, ſat reclin'd at eaſe
The ſable artiſt; to the jav'lin's ſhaft,
The ebon ſtaff, or maple goblet, gave

Fantaſtic

Fantaſtic decorations; ſimply carv'd,
Yet not inelegant: beneath his hands,
Oft too a cloth of firmer texture grew,
That ſteep'd in azure, mocks the brittle threads,
And fleeting tincture, of our boaſted arts.
The taſk, perform'd beneath no maſter's eye,
Of trivial worth eſteem'd, ſucceſſive months
Unfiniſh'd ſaw, whilſt objects interven'd,
Deem'd more important; that by grateful change,
Cheer'd the ſlow progreſs of his guiltleſs life.

Nor yet unknown to more refin'd delights,
Nor to the ſoft and ſocial feelings loſt,
Was the ſwart African: wherever man
Erects his dwelling, whether on the bleak
And frozen cliffs of Zembla's northern coaſt,
Or in meridian regions; Love attends
And ſhares his habitation: in his train
Come fond affections, come endearing joys,
And confidence, and tenderneſs, and truth;

For

For not to poliſh'd life alone confin'd,
Are theſe primæval bleſſings; rather there
Deſtroyed, or injured; mercenary ties
There bind ill ſuited tempers; avarice there,
And pride, and low'ring ſuperſtition, croſs
The tender union; but where nature reigns,
And univerſal freedom, love exults
As in his native clime; there aims ſecure
His brighteſt arrow, ſteep'd in keen delights,
To cultur'd minds, and colder ſkies, unknown.

Dark, and portentous, as the ſable cloud,
That bears unſeen contagion on its wings,
And drops deſtruction on the race of man,
Came the foul plague, that, brought from Europe, ſpread
O'er Afric's peaceful ſhores, with ſudden change
Perverting good, to evil: at the ſight
Nature recoil'd, and tore with frantic hands
Her own immortal features: broke at once,

Were all the bonds of ſocial life, and rage,
And deadly hatred, and uncheck'd revenge,
In every boſom burn'd. The dance, the ſong
Were now no more, for treachery's ſecret ſnare
Impended o'er their revels, and diſtruſt
Had alienated man from man: no more,
At early dawn, o'er hills and plains unknown,
The hunter took his ſolitary range,
Leſt, fiercer than the tyger or the pard,
He there ſhou'd meet his fellows, and become
Himſelf the prey. Then mutual wars aroſe,
And neighbouring ſtates, that never knew before
A motive of contention, took the field;
Not with the glorious hope of conqueſt fir'd,
But with deteſted avarice, to purloin
Their foes, and ſell to Europe's ſhameleſs race,
Their unoffending neighbours; ſoon themſelves
To ſhare their lot, and mourn the ſelf-ſame chains.

But ſay, whence firſt th' unnatural trade aroſe,

And what the ſtrong inducement, that cou'd tempt
Such dread perverſion? Cou'd not Afric's wealth,
Her ivory, and her granulated gold,
To her ſuperfluous, well repay the ſtores,
(Superfluous too) from diſtant Europe ſent;
But liberty and life muſt be the price,
And man become the merchandize and ſpoil?
— O, when with ſlow, and heſitating voice,
The wily European firſt propos'd
His hateful barter, that ſome patriot *hand*,
Urg'd with prophetic rage, had ſtopt the ſource
Of future ill, and deep within his breaſt
The deadly weapon buried!—whilſt aloof
Stood his pale brethren, paler then with fear;
And ſhuddering at the awful deed, had learnt
To venerate th' eternal rights of man.

Artful, and fair, and eloquent of ſpeech,
Was the firſt tempter, that in Eden's groves,
Guiltleſs before, brought ſin, and pain, and death:

And fair, and artful, were the cultur'd train,
That wound the ſnare round Afric's thoughtleſs ſons,
And dragg'd them to perdition. In their eyes
Bright ſhine the ſplendid ſtores; around them throng
The wondering natives; and with ſtrange delight,
Gaze on their novel beauties; as they gaze,
New wiſhes riſe, which, gratified in part,
And part reſtrain'd, and heighten'd by delay,
Wake the dread luſt of having. What their climes
Of rich, or rare, for ornament, or uſe,
Afford, they glad reſign; but ſtill unbought
Remains the ſhining treaſure, far beyond
All poſſible equivalent; for vain
Were all the proffer'd gifts, that higheſt ſtood
In the poor native's eſtimate; his bow,
His reedy arrows, or the dappled ſkin
Won from the leopard in the dangerous chace.
Mean time impetuous roſe the fierce deſire,
And, like a ſudden deluge, ſwept along
The ſenſe of right uncultur'd nature gave,

Each

Each ſofter feeling, every ſocial tie,
And mark'd th' arrival of the dreadful hour.
—The European caught the favouring time;
And with bland ſpeech, and ſoften'd ſmile, propos'd
A prize, that might the ſplendid booty win,
—A brother's ſacrifice.——

Safe on the ſheltering coaſt of wide Benin,
The ſtately veſſel rode; and now the ſun,
Deep in the weſtern flood had quench'd his fires;
And the wan moon, in heav'n's oppoſing ſcale,
Hung her pale lamp; that o'er the breezy main,
Scatter'd its broken radiance—all was ſtill—
When dim, beneath the ſober beam of night,
Was ſeen the light canoe, that tow'rds the ſhip
Its haſty courſe directed; in it ſat
Arebo and Corymbo, brothers they,
And till this fatal moment more attach'd
By friendſhip than by nature; but too weak
Were nature's ties, or friendſhip's cloſer bonds,

And

And in the element of fierce deſire,
Their brittle hold reſign'd. Corymbo doom'd
His brother to captivity, and lur'd
To ſhare the feign'd excurſion, and partake
The evening revel, with the morning light
Again to ſeek the ſhore. They reach the ſhip—
A ſhout of joy ſalutes them; on the deck
Corymbo leaps, whilſt trembling cloſe behind
Arebo follows, ſcarce as yet reſolv'd
To ſhare the banquet; on the diſtant ſhore
He turn'd his eyes, and felt his ſpirits ſink
In ſtrange dejection; ſudden fear impell'd
His ſteps, and from the veſſel's tow'ring height,
He ſought to plunge for ſafety in the flood:
—But ah! too late—ſuperior ſtrength reſtrains
His vain attempt; and inſults, ſtripes, and chains,
Fill the ſad ſeries of his future days.

Mean time Corymbo, ſtruck with conſcious guilt,
Turn'd from the conflict; and in haſte requir'd

The promis'd bounty. This be thy reward,
Cried, with malicious ſmile, the watchful fiend
That firſt devis'd the treachery, and diſplay'd
His implements of torture, whips, and bonds.
—Deep in the centre of the floating pile,
Were thrown the hapleſs brothers, there to paſs
The changing moons, till in the weſtern world
New woes awaited them, whilſt mutual hate
Sharpen'd each pang, and doubled every ill.

Thus blaſted were the joys of private life;
And the fair fruit of confidence, receiv'd
A canker in its core, that all unſeen
To poiſon turn'd its ſalutary powers.
—But theſe were trivial injuries, confin'd
To private wrong; and like the fever's rage,
Sought but precarious victims for their prey:
But ſoon the epidemic madneſs ſwell'd
To peſtilential fury, and involv'd
Surrounding nations in one general doom.

Nor

Nor only then, beneath the gloom of night,
In the lone path, the ſable ruffian lurk'd,
Watchful to ſeize and ſell for uſeleſs toys,
His weaker fellow; but deluded ſtates
Avow'd the public meaſure; to the field
March'd forth contending armies, unprovok'd
By previous wrong, to wage unnatural war:
Whilſt he, the white deceiver, who had ſown
The ſeeds of diſcord, ſaw with horrid joy
The harveſt ripen to his utmoſt wiſh;
And reap'd the ſpoils of treachery, guilt, and blood.

Deep in the ſhady covert of a wood,
That ſcreen'd from noon-day rage the ſlight-built bowers,
And diſtant far from ocean's heaving tides,
Lay a ſmall hamlet; whoſe inglorious ſons,
Were ſtrangers yet to war; ſave when provok'd
By hunger's call, the monſters of the waſte
Attack'd their dwellings. O'er the lone retreat Sail'd

Sail'd the dim cloud of night, and thro' the trees
Sigh'd the ſoft gale, and huſh'd to deep repoſe
The guiltleſs tenants; when a ſudden fire
Involv'd their habitations; thro' the flames
They ruſh'd for ſafety; but a numerous throng
Of native ruffians, from a diſtant ſhore,
Attack'd the helpleſs crew, and bore away
Their trembling victims: loudly roſe the voice
Of anguiſh, whilſt the mother for her child
Struggled with frantic violence, and dar'd
Th' extreme of danger; whilſt the lover claſp'd
The miſtreſs of his choice, and rais'd his breaſt
To meet the threat'ned blow; whilſt youth, alarm'd,
Truſted to flight for ſafety, and the tear
Of ſupplicating age was pour'd in vain:
—Fond tears, and vain attempts! ſhall mercy reſt
In ſavage boſoms, when the cultur'd mind
Diſclaims her influence? From their peaceful home
For ever torn, and chain'd in long array,
The mourning ſufferers move along the plain,

A ſpectacle of woe; and frequent turn
Their tear-dimm'd eyes towards the fav'rite ſpot
That gave them birth, and ſaw their youthful ſports;
Whoſe ſtreams had cool'd their thirſt, whoſe foreſts dark
Had ſcreen'd their ſlumbers, and whoſe varied ſcenes
Had witneſs'd all their joys. They turn, and mourn
Their ſimple threſhold now with kindred blood
Defil'd; their roofs of rapid flames the prey;
The partners of their pleaſures now condemn'd
To ſhare their lot, or pouring out their lives
Beneath untented wounds.—They turn and weep,
Whilſt o'er the burning ſand the frequent goad
Haſtens their lingering ſteps, till on their ſight
Opens th' extended ocean: hovering near,
Like ſome dread monſter, watchful for its prey,
The veſſel glooms portentous; ſoon to ſeize
Her living victims, and to whelm them deep
In the dark cavern of her loathſome womb.

O might we here abſolve the theme, and hide
Beneath th' impenetrable veil of night
New ſcenes of horror; happy ſo to ſpare
The bluſh, that elſe muſt tinge th' ingenuous cheek;
To ſpare the tear of pity, nor provoke
The ſudden imprecation that will burſt
From plain integrity, when open wrong
Wantons ſecure in guilt.—And let it burſt,
And let the cheek with burning bluſhes glow,
And pity pour her tears: for is not Man
The author of the wrong? And ſhall not they,
In colour, nation, faith,—aſſociate all—
Who ſee, yet not reſent it; hear of it,
Yet ſtand regardleſs; know it, yet partake
The luxuries it ſupplies; ſhall theſe not feel
The keen emotions of remorſe and ſhame?
And learn this truth ſevere, that whilſt they ſhun
The glorious conflict, nor aſſiſt the cauſe
Of ſuffering nature, THEY PARTAKE THE GUILT?

Come then, ye generous few, whoſe hearts can feel,
For ſtranger ſorrows; who can hear the voice
Of miſery breathe acroſs th' Atlantic main,
Diminiſh'd not by diſtance!—Ye too come,
Ye patrons of diſtreſs, beneath whoſe ſmile
Exulting charity beholds with joy
The numerous temples riſing to her fame;
Where age in peace repoſes, where the young
A ſafe aſylum find; where ſickneſs ſmiles,
And hunger meets relief! Come, and with me
Deſcend that floating dungeon's dark receſs,
To air ſcarce pervious; where in numbers pil'd,
And cloſely wedg'd within the ſcanty breadth
Of calculated inches, paſs their hours
The victims of our avarice.—Tell me, then,
Did ever he, the glory of our iſle,
Our new ALCIDES, in whoſe conquering graſp
The ſerpents of oppreſſion droop'd and died;
Who now eſſays his heavenly temper'd ſpear
Againſt the eaſtern Python's deadly rage:

Immortal

Immortal HOWARD! when with fearleſs ſtep
He trac'd pale miſery to her laſt receſs,
Midſt putrid vapours and infectious damps,
Th' abodes of harden'd guilt—Did ever he
Behold a ſight ſo dreadful? where the dead
Preſs on the dying; where the parting groan
Is heard without compaſſion, or excites
The living wretches envy; where debarr'd
From every bleſſing, and from every hope,
Death comes not at their bidding, but ſelects
With wayward choice his favorites; harſhly kind,
Diſſolves the bond, and mocks the tyrant's rage?

A truce with declamation:—thus methinks
I hear ſome veteran trafficker in blood,
Whoſe leiſure—by repeated crimes procur'd—
Is us'd to juſtify thoſe crimes, reply:
—Peace to your declamation, nor preſume
To judge another's feelings.—Is it yours,
A ſtranger to the ſcene, to tell the cares,

The

The anxious days, the buſy, reſtleſs nights,
Devoted to the ſuccour of the ſlaves
When viſited by ſickneſs? Is it yours
To tell what arts are us'd, the healing arts
Of cultivated Europe; to appeaſe
The recent pang, or ſtop the ſpreading rage
Of fierce contagion? But ſuppoſe we grant
What you aſſume unjuſtly, that our ears
Are ſhut to miſery's voice; our harden'd hearts
Loſt to the ſocial ſympathies of man;
Ye will not ſure deny, that ſtill we feel
The potent charm of intereſt; and with her
Ev'n ſhou'd humanity refuſe to join,
She here becomes her ſubſtitute, and leads
To equal bleſſings: 'tis not then enough
You prove us void of feeling; you muſt ſhew
Our folly far exceeds our guilt, or ſee
Your blunted darts, from truth's bright ſhield, recoil.

And who ſhall rob you of your juſt applauſe!

Ye watchful guardians of the ſubject crew,
That curſe the lives ye cheriſh? 'Tis, we own,
No common caſe, to ſhut the gates of death
On thoſe who wiſh to paſs them; to retain
Within its ſuffering bound, th' indignant ſoul
That pants for freedom, as the hunted hart
That ſeeks the coolneſs of the chryſtal ſpring:
And when the tyrant of the harmleſs flock,
That whilſt he feeds them, deſtines them to death,
Is call'd humane, ye then may juſtly boaſt
The glorious appellation: 'Tis enough
Mean time for you, if life and health remain
Amongſt your captives, till they reach the ſhores
Of thoſe polluted Iſlands, that too ſoon
Shall realize the evils which they dread.
—Then ends your ſympathy—and whether there
Long years of ſuffering waſte by ſlow degrees
Their vital powers, or violence deform
Their mutilated limbs, or hunger gnaws,
Or ſickneſs preys upon them, unconcern'd

Ye give them to their fate; as Jacob's ſons
Sold their more righteous brother; nor inquire
What ills to ſuffer, or what deaths to die.

Moſt fitly then ye throw aſide the veil,
That not conceals, but more deforms your crimes,
Tinging their features with the loathſome hue
Of foul hypocriſy: and right ye deem,
When ſcorning pity's ſofter ties, ye own
That avarice only prompts the deed humane,
Which ſeems to claim a fairer origin.
—But why with fooliſh fondneſs wou'd you ſtrive
To dreſs a devil in an angel's garb,
And bid mankind adore him?—Can it be,
That he, the fouleſt fiend that ever ſtalk'd
Acroſs the confines of this ſuffering world;
He, the dread ſpirit of commercial gain,
Whoſe heart is marble, and whoſe harpy hands
Are ſtain'd with blood of millions; can it be,
That he ſhou'd perſonate the form divine

Of ſoft compaſſion, and perform the taſk
To her mild cares and lenient hand aſſign'd?
—It is not his, on miſery's bleeding wounds
To pour the ſoothing balm; to raiſe the head
That droops in ſickneſs; timely to ſupply
The healing potion; and the bitter cup
Sweeten with words of ſympathy. To him,
Of all that breathes, indifferent is the fate;
And whilſt one hand the cordial drop ſuſtains,
The other graſps a dagger; thus prepar'd,
With life, and death, he balances the ſcale,
And as the beam preponderates, ſaves, or kills.

But ſay, ye ſhameleſs ſophiſts! who compreſs'd
Within the confines of that iron grate,
Its ſtruggling tenants, who for air and food
Inceſſant clamour? 'Twas not ſhe whoſe name
Ye now profan'd; beneath whoſe kindling ſmile
All animated nature leaps with joy;
She, from whoſe ſtreaming eyes, your murd'rous deeds

Draw tears of blood—No, 'twas the hated power
Of unrelenting avarice, that with her
Late claim'd unnatural union; and aſſur'd
Himſelf her ſubſtitute: Inſatiate he,
Whilſt thirſt of gain abſorb'd each other ſenſe,
Pour'd in his cavern deep, throng after throng,
His living victims; with his iron mace,
Cruſh'd, and condens'd their ranks, and o'er them clos'd
Th' impenetrable barrier.—Grimly then,
Like him of yore, that in his blood-ſtain'd cave
Confin'd the wandering Greeks, he ſat and ſmil'd,
And brooded o'er his treaſures, now eſteem'd
Irrevocably his.—Deluded fool!
The cup, thy giddy rage has fill'd too high,
Like that of Tantalus ſhall ſoon o'erflow,
And leave thee wondering at the ſudden void.
For nature, Proteus like, when long confin'd
Delights to change her form: fermenting flow,
Her ſilent work commences; ſcarce perceiv'd

Its hidden progreſs, till the leaven reach
The principle of being, to new forms
And combinations tending: Then uncheck'd
Rages the wild contagion.—Vainly then,
The tyrant opens wide his iron gate,
And bids the fainting wretch once more imbibe
The fragrant gales of day; or o'er him pours
In copious ſtreams th' invigorating lymph:
—Ah ſee, his palſied lips refuſe to taſte
The kind aſtringent; ſudden tremors ſhake
His limbs; his glaring eye-balls roll in death;
And unreluctant, from its wearied frame,
Flies the freed ſpirit:—Yet not ſeeks alone
The promis'd regions of eternal ſpring;
But mingling with the kindred ſouls, whoſe bonds
Each paſſing hour diſſevers, hovers o'er
The ſcene, and bids its lov'd companions haſte,
And ſhare the ſweets of freedom: or delights
To glance before the tyrant's fear-ſtruck ſight;
Mock at his anguiſh, feaſt upon the fears

That agitate his boſom, whilſt he ſees
The ſpirit of diſeaſe his folly rais'd,
Roam unconfin'd; and in one common fate,
Involve at once th' oppreſſor, and the ſlave.

Nations of Europe! o'er whoſe favour'd lands
Philoſophy hath rais'd her light divine,
(A brighter ſun than that which rules the day)
Beneath whoſe piercing beam, the ſpectre forms
Of ſlaviſh ſuperſtition ſlow retire!
Who greatly ſtruggling with degrading chains,
Have freed your limbs from bondage! felt the charms
Of property! beyond a tyrant's luſt
Have plac'd domeſtic bliſs! and ſoon ſhall own
That nobleſt freedom, freedom of the mind,
Secure from prieſtly craft and papal claims!
—But chiefly thou, the miſtreſs of the main,
Who ſits ſerene amidſt thy ſubject waves,
That bring thee hourly tribute; Queen of Iſles,
Of faith unblemiſh'd, of unconquer'd ſoul,

And

And prizing freedom dearer than the blood
That circles round thine heart! O Albion, ſay,
And ſay, ye ſiſter kingdoms; why remains
This univerſal blot, that marks your brows
With black ingratitude; and tells high heaven
You merit not your bleſſings? Why remains
This foul and open wound on nature's limb,
Waſting its healthful powers? (and who ſhall tell
How far may ſpread th' infection?) Bluſh ye not
To boaſt your equal laws, your juſt reſtraints,
Your rights defin'd, your liberties ſecur'd,
Whilſt with an iron hand ye cruſh to earth
The helpleſs African; and bid him drink
That cup of ſorrow, which yourſelves have daſh'd
Indignant, from oppreſſion's fainting graſp?
—O Britain! jealous of thy private rights,
Like ſome fond mother, with a partial eye
Thou ſeeſt thine offspring; and ſhou'd fraud, or force,
Attempt to tear them from thee; ſoon wou'd riſe
Thy kindling ſpirit, and th' inſidious foe

Wou'd

Wou'd feel thy ready vengeance: And ſhalt thou
Incroach upon another? Shall thine hand
Be ſtain'd with murder? Or with paltry theft
Polluted? Or abandon'd to thy ſhame,
Canſt thou receive the produce of the crimes
Thy ſons commit, and from thy tow'ring ſtate
Affect to know not of them? High in rank
Amidſt ſurrounding nations; high in fame;
In public ſpirit high; and high in wealth;
Forget not, Britain, higher ſtill than thee
Sits the great Judge of Nations, who can weigh
The wrong, and can repay. Before his throne
Confeſs thy weakneſs; nor with impious voice
Arraign th' immutable decree, that fix'd
The bounds of wrong and right; that gave to all
Their equal bleſſings, and ſecures its ends
By penalties ſevere; which often ſlow,
But always certain, on the guilty head,
Pour down the terrors of the wrath divine.

11 : 7 :49

END OF PART THE FIRST.

Wou'd feel thy ready vengeance: And that dare
Incroach upon another? Shall thine hand
Be stain'd with murder? Or with perjury theft
Polluted? Or abandon'd to thy flame,
Shall dare receive the produce of the crimes
Thy sons commit, and from thy towring state
Affect to know not of them? High in rank
Amidst surrounding nations; high in fame;
In public spirit high; and high in wealth;
Forget not, Britain, higher still than these
Sits the great Judge of Nations, who can weigh
The wrong, and can repay. Before his throne
Coucht thy weakness; nor with impious voice
Arraign the immutable decree, that fixt
The bounds of wrong and right; that gave to all
Their equal blessings, and secures its ends
By penalties severe; which often flow,
But always certain, on the guilty head.
Pour down the terrors of the wrath divine,

END OF PART THE FIRST.

THE

WRONGS OF AFRICA,

A POEM.

THE

WRONGS OF AFRICA,

A POEM.

PART THE SECOND.

——————FOR OF WHOM SUCH MASSACRE
MAKE THEY BUT OF THEIR BRETHREN, MEN OF MEN?

MILTON.

LONDON:

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THE Author had flattered himſelf, that the ſcheme of his whole Poem would have been ſufficiently evident from the firſt part; but having heard it urged as an objection againſt his work, that it was defective in its plan, he thinks it neceſſary to mention, that his original idea was to finiſh it in three parts; the firſt of which was intended to extend to the mode of procuring ſlaves on the coaſt of Africa—the ſecond, to the voyage from thence to the Weſt-Indian Iſlands—and the third, to the deſtination of the ſlaves, and the ſeverities exerciſed on them in the colonies.——The firſt part, accordingly, will be found to be confined to its proper purpoſe; the ſecond continues the ſubject, and the Author is in hopes the whole will be comprehended in the third part, though the multiplicity of materials prevents him at preſent from fixing any preciſe bounds to his work, which may alſo poſſibly be abridged, by circumſtances that may in ſome degree invalidate the motives which firſt prompted the Author to this undertaking.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE

WRONGS OF AFRICA.

PART THE SECOND.

FAIR is this fertile ſpot, which God aſſign'd
As man's terreſtrial home; where every charm
Attracts his unperverted ſenſe, and fills
His heart with gladneſs: to his raptur'd ſight
Th' extended landſcape opens; chearful green
Inveſts the lawn; luxuriant foreſts wave;

The chryſtal ſtream irriguous winds its way,
And heaven's bright azure canopies the whole.
Soft on his ear the voice of muſic breathes
In grateful undulations: odours ſweet
From herbs and trees, from flowers of varied hue,
Salute him, and in ſilent whiſpers bring
The pleaſing promiſe of the future year.
—Form'd with a ſoul to reliſh all their charms,
Man, wanders o'er their beauties unconfin'd,
And lauds their Author: when ſome fiend malign,
O'er all the ſcene his blighting influence ſheds,
And bids it ſicken on the ſated ſenſe,
To loathing and diſguſt.——And ſhall the ſun,
E'er from the eaſt his glorious courſe begin,
And not be bleſt by man? or that mild orb
That rules the hours of night, and ſooths to peace
The tides of paſſion, hear th' inſulting voice
Of hopeleſs anguiſh, that perverſe arraigns
Her light, and bids her never more return?
——Yes——thanks to man, the ſcourge of all his kind,
And traitor to himſelf; who never yet

Has rais'd his bounded views beyond the ſcope
Of ſelfiſh pleaſure, and immediate good.
—Yes, thanks to man; whoſe follies, and whoſe crimes,
Change the fair face of nature, and pervert
Her deareſt gifts to evil:—breathes the air
Its healthful fragrance, his miſguided rage
With foul contagion loads its dropping wings,
Swept from the carnage of the reeking field.
O'er the broad ocean, whoſe encircling arms
Were meant to join the far diſſever'd land
In friendly intercourſe, and wide diffuſe
The bleſſings of each different ſtate to all,
His mad ambition, ſends in dread array,
His meſſengers of terror; prompt to pour
Their fiery vengeance, on each diſtant ſhore,
Whoſe natives, to his abſolute command,
Their ſoil, their produce, liberties, and lives,
Reſign not. He, amidſt the ſpicy climes
Of Aſia, where prolific nature pours
Her unappropriate, and ſuperfluous wealth,

 Within

Within his hoarded magazine confines
A nation's produce; and around its doors,
With lifted hands, and unaccuſing voice,
Hears the meek native ſupplicate for food,
And bids him periſh; and, as tho' he fear'd
Some happier ſpot of earth ſhould yet remain,
That bore not bleeding witneſs of his guilt,
He, from their parent-ſhore, relentleſs tears
The ſons of Afric; to the madding wave,
To ſtrange diſeaſes, to the piercing taunts
Of wanton inſolence, and all the wrongs
That man from man can ſuffer, dooms their days!

Deep freighted now with human merchandize,
The veſſel quits the ſhore; prepar'd to meet
The ſtorms, and dangers, of th' Atlantick main;
Her motion ſcarce obſerv'd, ſave when the flood
In frequent murmurs beats againſt her prow,
And the tall cocoas ſlowly ſeem to change
Their former ſtation. Leſſening on the ſight,
The diſtant mountains bow'd their cloud capt heads;

And all the bright and variegated ſcene,
Of hills, and groves, and lawns, and reed-built ſheds,
That oft had caught the priſoner's ardent eye,
Not hopeleſs of eſcape, now gradual ſunk
To one dim hue. Amongſt the ſable tribes
Soon ſpread th' alarm; when ſudden from the depths
Of crouded holds, and loathſome caverns, roſe
One univerſal yell, of dread deſpair,
And anguiſh inexpreſſible; for now
Hope's ſlender thread was broke; extinguiſh'd now
The ſpark of expectation, that had lurk'd
Beneath the aſhes of their former joys,
And o'er deſpondency's ſurrounding gloom,
Had ſhed its languid luſtre. Bold, and fierce,
Of high indignant ſpirit, ſome their chains
Shook menacing, and from their low'ring eyes,
Flaſh'd earneſt of the flame that burnt within:
Whilſt groans, and loud laments, and ſcalding tears,
Mark'd the keen pangs of others.—Female ſhrieks,
At intervals, in dreadful concert heard,

To wild diſtraction manly ſorrow turn'd;
And ineffectual, o'er their heedleſs limbs,
Was wav'd the wiry whip, that dropp'd with blood.

Now ſunk the mournful day; but mournful ſtill
The night that followed: and the riſing morn,
That ſpread before the hopeleſs captives view,
Nought, but the wide expanſe of air, and ſea,
Heard all their cries with double rage renew'd.
Nor did the ſtorm of headſtrong paſſions reſt,
Till the third evening clos'd; nor by degrees
Was huſh'd; but ſudden as th' autumnal blaſt,
Its rage exhauſted ſinks at once to reſt;
Whilſt the wide wood, that bow'd beneath its courſe,
Declines its wearied branches, thus the ſtrife
Ceas'd—not a groan, and not a voice was heard;
But, as one ſoul had influenc'd every breaſt,
A ſullen ſtillneſs reign'd. Reſign'd and mild,
As if forgot their former ſenſe of wrong,
They took the ſcanty fare they lately ſpurn'd;
And if a tear ſhould mingle with their food,

No

No prying eye perceiv'd it: day by day
Saw the ſame ſcene renew'd; whilſt proſperous gales
Full towards her deſtin'd port the veſſel bore;
And gently breathing o'er the ſeaman's mind,
Came the remembrance of his native land;
The thoughts of former pleaſures, former friends,
Of reſt and independance; heedleſs he,
That on the miſeries of others, roſe
The fabrick of his joys; and gratified
His ſelfiſh views, whilſt multitudes bewail'd
Th' eternal loſs of nature's deareſt gifts;
To them irreparable wrong, to him
A ſlight acceſſion to his ſtores of bliſs.

'Twas night; and now the ſhip, with ſteady courſe,
Purſued her midway voyage: ſubſided now
The tyrant's dread, a more indulgent lot
The ſlaves experienc'd; and their chains relax'd
Their biting cincture. Fearleſs trod the deck
The unſuſpicious guard; whilſt, from below,
Amidſt the croud of captives, not a ſound

Of louder note aſcended. Yet, even then,
Each eye was wake, and ev'ry heaving breaſt
Was panting for revenge. For now approach'd
The awful hour, long hop'd for, long forefix'd,
Sacred to vengeance, to the thirſt of blood,
And bitter retribution. Slowly roll'd
The moments, whilſt with anxious minds, the ſlaves
Waited the voice that loos'd them from reſtraint,
And turn'd them on their tyrants: not more prompt
The nitrous grain, that, at the touch of fire,
Burſts in reſiſtleſs flame. Nor yet the voice
Is heard; but thro' each deep and dark receſs
A hollow murmur riſes, that upbraids
The long delay—nor yet the voice is heard!
Whilſt in each agitated breaſt, by turns,
Diſmay, and doubt, and deſperation reign;
And fancy, now triumphant, now depreſs'd,
Luxuriant wantons thro' the ſcene of blood,
Or feels the fiery torture.—" Riſe, revenge,
" Revenge your wrongs," th' expected voice exclaims,

And

And meets a ready anſwer, from the tongues
Of countleſs numbers, from each gloomy cell,
In dreadful cries return'd. But who ſhall tell
The wild commotion; who the frantic rage
Of ſavage fury, when, with joint accord,
They burſt th oppoſing gratings, and pour'd forth,
Impetuous as the flood that breaks its mound?
—What tho' unarm'd!—upon th' unſparing ſteel
They ruſh'd regardleſs; and th' expected wound
Deep, but not always deadly, rous'd their minds
To fiercer deſperation: thronging cloſe,
Fearleſs, and firm, they join'd th' unequal war;
And when the fatal weapon pierc'd their ſide,
They ſtruggled to retain it, and in death
Diſarm'd the hand that conquer'd.—Thick they fell,
But oft not unreveng'd, for faſtening cloſe
Upon the foe ſome gain'd the veſſel's ſide,
And ruſh'd together to a watry death;
Whilſt from the yawning hold, emerging throngs
Replac'd the vanquiſh'd, and, with hideous cries,

Struck

Struck terror thro' the tyrants chilling veins,
And bad oppreſſion tremble. Nerveleſs ſtood
The harden'd ſeamen: but recovering ſoon,
They gain'd the barrier, that acroſs the deck
Its firm defence projected; then began
The ſcene of blood; then pour'd amongſt the ſlaves,
Frantic, and fierce, and madding with their wrongs,
The volley'd vengeance; whilſt without a foe,
Miſguided courage urg'd the ſtrife in vain;
And check'd by hands unſeen, relax'd its powers
In ſudden weakneſs.—Terror, and ſurpriſe,
Like deadly blood-hounds, ſeiz'd the vanquiſh'd crew,
That ſtood defenceleſs, and expos'd, the mark
Of uncontroll'd revenge; and as they fell,
Without reluctance ſaw the purple ſtream,
Slow welling from the fount of life, and join'd
In kindred currents pour along the deck,
Tinging with guiltleſs blood the weſtern wave.

But hark! the ſound of conqueſt and of joy
Burſts from th' exulting victors.—Hark again!

The

The thrice repeated triumph, tells the heavens,
That innocence once more has felt the fangs,
Th' inſatiate fangs of guilt, and weeps in blood
Her juſt reſiſtance, and her rightful aims!

Peace to your ſhades, ye favour'd train, who fell
Amidſt the generous ſtruggle! o'er whoſe limbs
The friendly hand of Death, has interpos'd
His fated curtain; that, nor human force,
Nor human malice, nor the deep regret
Of diſappointed avarice, nor the pang
Of keen remorſe, that gnaws the murderer's peace,
And blaſts his future joys, can e'er remove.
——Secure beneath its guardian gloom, ye ſleep,
In undiſturb'd repoſe: no more ye ſtart
At miſery's kindred ſhriek; no more ye weep
O'er fond domeſtic ties, untimely torn;
No longer from th' oppreſſor's hand, ye aſk
The ſlender pittance, that prolongs your lives
To lengthen'd anguiſh; nor for you prepares,

Th' unfeeling planter, 'midſt his cultur'd iſles,
(Iſles moiſt with tears, and fertiliz'd with blood)
His whips, his racks, his gibbets, and his chains.
——Yours is the palm of conqueſt;—you have found
A ſhelter from the hovering ſtorm, that waits
Your leſs ſucceſsful fellows; who lament,
And vainly wiſh to ſhare your happier lot.

Yet not beneath oblivion's gloom to reſt,
Nor meet the tribute of promiſcuous praiſe,
Was doom'd Cymbello.—Where Bancora pours,
Towards Zaire's broad flood his tributary wave,
And cools the fervid equatorial gale,
Cymbello firſt drew breath.—His father ſway'd
Monſol's imperial ſceptre.—To a form
Of faultleſs mold, Cymbello join'd a ſoul,
Firm, generous, comprehenſive; keen to mark,
Wiſe to approve, and active to purſue
Each nobler object.—Anxious for his fame,
The watchful father, to Matomba's care

Aſſign'd

Aſſign'd the riſing virtues of the youth,
Ere in the ſun-like flattery of a court,
Had ſhrunk their native vigour.—" Go," ſaid he,
" Go, and beneath Matomba's peaceful roof
" Paſs thy young hours; and taſte thoſe vernal ſweets,
" That wait not on thy riper years, ordain'd
" To be thy country's ſacrifice.—His hand
" Shall check each wandering ſtep that turns to ill,
" And by obeying, thou ſhalt learn to rule."

Remote from peopled haunts, 'midſt ſilent groves,
Where palms, and plantains, intermix'd their ſhade,
And ſpread their broad leaves to the ſcorching ſun,
Matomba's dwelling ſtood.—A chryſtal ſtream
Guſh'd from the gloom, and lav'd a choſen ſpot,
That own'd his conſtant culture: Aloes there
Shot forth their vigorous ſtems, and hung their bells
In grateful negligence; Hæmanthus ſpread
His crimſon bloom; the flowery Almond there,
Profuſe of fragrance, ſcented all the plain,

And the gay Protea wav'd his ſilvery leaf,
And glitter'd on the day.—A thouſand plants,
The favourites of the ſun, whoſe vivid tints
Decay, and ſicken, in our northern climes,
There in perennial luſtre ſmil'd, nor fear'd
The chilling blaſts of Eurus.—To the ſhades
Of this ſecure retreat, Matomba led
His royal pupil; with aſſiduous eye
Watch'd o'er his opening mind; and as he mark'd
The riſing ſpark of curioſity,
Diſcloſe its lambent blaze, with temperate hand
Supplied its cravings, from the boundleſs ſtore
Of nature, culling what might beſt ſupply
His pleaſing purpoſe; firſt, the various tribes
Of vegetative life, their ſcent, their hue,
Their beauteous conformation, and their change,
Diſplay'd a wondrous volume.—Riſing hence
To animated being, wonder grew
To admiration; whilſt the maſter's voice
Explain'd the different habits, and the laws,

Of theſe, that touch'd with more ethereal fire,
In flood, and foreſt, deep beneath the earth,
Or thro' the fields of air, delighted feel
The conſciouſneſs of being.—Thence with man,
Prime work of Heaven, he dignified his theme;
And, with reſiſtleſs energy, impreſs'd
Upon the ſtripling's mind, the generous truths
That man to man is equal; that the rights
Which liberal nature gave alike to all,
Tho' often cruſh'd beneath the hand of power,
Can periſh but with life:—that ſtates were form'd
For ſocial purpoſes: that he who claims
From ſubject throngs allegiance and ſupport,
Owes in return, his confidence, his love,
His vigilance:—that royalty abus'd
Is worſe than treaſon; and the ſovereign name,
A feather'd toy, that weighs not in the ſcale
Of univerſal juſtice.—Stern he heard,
Nor ſhrunk the youth to hear the ſacred ſtrain;
And whilſt his throbbing heart confeſs'd its power,

And the mild luſtre of benevolence,
Illum'd his ſwimming eye, " Be mine," he cry'd,
" To guard my people's rights; and if I tear
" With impious hands the web of public faith,
" Or ſtain its native luſtre, may the ſteel
" Of high vindictive freedom purge the guilt."

Bleſt were the hours, whilſt here the princely youth
Imbib'd inſtruction; interrupted oft
By vigorous exerciſe, and grateful toil,
For not the ſilken bonds of indolence
Reſtrain'd his ardent ſpirit.—Every ſcene
To him was pleaſure; but a ſofter hue
Allay'd their glowing tints, a milder charm
Endear'd their beauties, when Kiaza ſhar'd
His devious path, and on his faithful arm
Reclin'd.—Of gentleſt manners was the maid,
Matomba's daughter! ſweeter than the breeze
That ſteals the Caltha's fragrance, and as chaſte
As the cool beam of evening—yet ſhe lov'd,
Nor ſought the blameleſs paſſion to conceal.

But years fly ſwift away, and ſwifter far
When pleaſure plumes their wings. From ſweet repoſe,
From love, and leiſure, to the active ſphere
Of public life, the royal youth withdrew:
Yet not to pomp, or pride, did love reſign
His empire; often from the crouded court,
To good Matomba's roof the prince retir'd,
Delighted to recall thoſe happier hours
When life was new, to trace the conſcious ſcenes
Of paſt delights, whoſe unembitter'd charm
Was dear to memory, and in lonely ſhades
Renew the promiſe of perpetual truth.

It chanc'd one evening, when the cooler hour
Invited, and refreſhing breezes blew,
Along the graſſy path, Cymbello led
His lov'd companion.—O'er the chequer'd ſcene
The moon with interrupted radiance ſhone;
And in fantaſtic ſhapes, athwart the gloom,
Cocoas, and pines, their giant ſhadows threw.

But

But nor th' untimely hour, nor lengthen'd way,
Abridg'd the tale of love; renewing ſtill,
And ſtill renewing its exhauſtleſs theme;
When ſudden, as the crouching tyger ſprings
Upon his prey, ruſh'd from a neighbouring brake,
A troop of black banditti; that debauch'd
By European arts, had wander'd far
In ſearch of human plunder. On the pair
They ſeiz'd, relentleſs; from the ſtruggling graſp
Of ſtrong affection tore them; nor indulg'd
The laſt ſad hope, to breathe a fond farewell
To all their paſt endearments: pinion'd cloſe,
O'er diſtant mountains, and thro' trackleſs plains,
They bore their princely victim; nor delay'd
By day or night their haſte, till on the ſhore,
The white receivers graſp'd their prize; and paid
With uſeleſs wares, with baubles, and with toys,
The ſacrilegious rape: with manacles
Compreſs'd his wriſt; with ignominious chains,
Loaded his freeborn limbs; and midſt the ſteam

Of

Of putrid exhalations thruſt him deep,
Beneath the world of waters; that refus'd,
Tho' often call'd, to whelm him in their waves,
And ſhield him from indignity, and ſhame.

Torn by conflicting paſſions, bar'd from air,
With taunts and ſtripes inſulted, and compell'd
To ſhare the anguiſh of deſponding throngs,
That hourly curs'd exiſtence, ſoon began
His vigor to decline; and on her throne,
Sat reaſon tottering. Sleep refus'd to cloſe
His eyes; that gazing wild with maniac glare,
Froze in their ſockets,—when before their orbs
Roſe a majeſtic form; that not confin'd
Within the ſhip's ſcant boundary, rear'd her head
Amidſt the rolling clouds. Her right hand held
A falchion dropping blood; and in her left
A heart yet palpitating, ſhock'd the ſight.
Dreadful ſhe ſmil'd, yet in her dreadful ſmile
Lurk'd faſcination: horrid was her voice,
Yet did it vibrate on the wretch's ear,

Sweeter than muſic. "Prince," ſhe cry'd, "I come
"To free from weak regret thy manly mind,
"And vindicate thy wrongs.—To deeds of death
"Riſe then! my ſteel ſhall point thy way."—She ſpoke,
And claſp'd him to her boſom. Thro' his frame
Ran fierce emotions of tumultuous joy;
He ſpurn'd the fond complaint; no more the ſigh
Burſt from his heart; his eyes forgot to weep;
Ambition now was huſh'd, the patriot hope
Expired; and love himſelf the rule reſign'd
To one unbounded thirſt of dread revenge.

True to the tenor of her magic voice,
'Twas he whoſe genius form'd the great deſign,
That promis'd death or freedom; who infus'd
His glowing ſpirit 'midſt the crowd of ſlaves,
Reſtrain'd the daring, rous'd the languid breaſt,
And bad them move obedient to his will,
As tho' one ſoul inſpir'd them. His command
Had urg'd them on to action; he had led
The way to conqueſt; and his vigorous arm

Had

Had wrench'd a dagger from the Engliſh chief,
And plung'd it in his heart.——But vain the ſtrife;
Nor ſtrength, nor courage, nor th' inſpiring hope
Of vengeance aught avail. Cymbello ſaw
The fruitleſs conflict, ſaw around him fall
His ſlaughter'd fellows; whilſt the wily foe
Secur'd from danger, dealt the leaden deaths
In ſwift rotation.——In wild agony
He turn'd his eyes; when full before him ſtood
His lov'd Kiaza. As the ſudden flaſh
Of light'ning, gliding o'er the vault of night,
Gilds with its momentary blaze, the path
Of ſome lone traveller, 'midſt the wintry ſtorm,
Then ſinks in darkneſs; thus a beam of joy
Diffus'd its tranſient luſtre.—Swift he flew,
He claſp'd the maid, whoſe ſinking head reclin'd
Upon his boſom—grief reſtrain'd the power
Of utterance, and the big diſtreſs was told
In ſilent tears.—With looks of ardent love
He o'er her hung; and now his faultering voice

Eſſay'd her name; but ſhrinking from his arms,
She fell a lifeleſs corſe. The level'd death
Aim'd at her lover, had transfix'd her heart.
—Cymbello rais'd his ſteel;—a frantic ſmile
Paſs'd o'er his cheek;—the deadly weapon pierc'd
Life's fragile barrier; near the maid he fell,
Embrac'd her in his languid graſp, and died.

Shall fancy then, before the awful ſhrine
Of public juſtice, dare intrude her ſtep,
And with falſe tints, and wanton pencil, ſtain
Th' unſullied robe of truth?—Ah deem not ſo,
Ye advocates of mercy!—Her weak hand
Wou'd catch ſome feature of that demon form,
That tramples o'er creation.—But in vain
She ſtrives to mark the terrors of his mien;
For whilſt ſhe gazes, darker ſhades o'erſpread
His deep deformities. Th' hiſtorian's ſkill,
The poet's energy, the painter's art,
Shrink from the conteſt: nor ſhall fancy's eye,

Select

Select a deed of more tranſcendant guilt,
Whoſe crimſon luſtre pales not, when compar'd
With the deep hue of his unvarniſh'd crimes.

—But ſoft—perchance a tale of private woe,
May lightly touch the mind: or ſhou'd it prompt
The tear of ſympathy, may fail to rouſe
Thoſe ſtrong emotions, that indignant glow
Which virtue feels, when generous aims inſpire
Conſenting boſoms; and the holy flame
Of freedom, only leads her votaries on,
To more immediate ruin. Hither then,
Ye impotent of ſoul, who falſely deem,
That heav'n's impartial gifts are circumſcrib'd
To colour, and to climate.—Hither too
Ye ſtudious of mankind, who ceaſeleſs urge
Th' hiſtoric toil; and trace th' illuſtrious deeds
Of former days, when Greece, and Rome, were free;
For with their proudeſt names, a faithful band
Of theſe, the ſable children of the ſun,

Whom

Whom modern pride diſdains, whom avarice dooms
To pain, and inſult, ſhall conteſt the palm
Of high unconquer'd courage.—Liſten then,
Whilſt truth reſtrains the muſe's wandering ſtep,
And gives her awful ſanction to the ſong.

From proud ANGOLA, o'er the weſtern main
A veſſel held her courſe; her wide womb fill'd
With men of firmer ſoul.—Diſtruſt and fear
Induc'd ſevere reſtraint;—reſtraint awak'd
The thirſt of vengeance; till to madneſs rous'd,
They dar'd th' unequal war.—But humbled ſoon
By undeſerv'd misfortune, and abaſh'd,
That victory ſmil'd not on their bold deſign;
Amidſt the deep receſſes of the hold,
Which day-light viſits not, the vanquiſh'd train
Withdrew them—pleas'd amidſt congenial gloom,
To hide their ſorrows from the victors' eye,
And weep their undiſtinguiſh'd hours away.
—Above them, with redoubled bolts ſecur'd,

The iron gratings frown'd; deſign'd to bar
Th' aſcent, 'till at the deſtin'd port arriv'd,
The rebel throng again ſhould meet the day.
But nature, kinder than relentleſs man,
Mock'd at th' attempt; and in her weakneſs ſtrong,
Controll'd his harſh deſign.—Amongſt the ſlaves
A ſwift contagion ſpread; from ſcanty food,
From putrid water, and impriſon'd air,
Engender'd.—Shuddering now with ſelfiſh fear,
Reſentment dropt her rod; and Avarice flew
To ſhield his treaſure; once again were op'd
The doors, and on the breezy deck were led
Th' emaciate crowd of ſlaves; but not in throngs
Promiſcuous, for ſuſpicion, yet alarm'd
By former dangers, into number'd ranks
Had claſs'd them; and with chains, together bound
Thrice five reluctant wretches: for an hour
Allow'd to breathe the gale; then ſeek again
Their loathſome dungeon, whilſt ſucceſſive ranks
Of equal number, occupied the place.

Mark!

Mark! on the deck a train of ſufferers ſit
Cloſe rang'd and link'd; meanwhile a chearful gale
Fills the broad canvas; and the veſſel ſkims
Light, o'er the daſhing brine.—But ſee, their breaſts
Beat high!—a look of ſecret joy illumes
Each ſable front!—their ſhivering limbs confeſs
The unexpreſs'd idea!——See they riſe,
At once they riſe; and with conſenting ſtep
Ruſh towards the prow!—A momentary glance
Gives the dread ſignal; and they headlong plunge
Amidſt the ocean.—Haſte, ye heedleſs crew,
Haſte check the ſails, and ſidelong to the breeze
Oppoſe the veſſel's breadth; for ſee, again,
Your captives from the circling waves emerge,
And rang'd in order, once again approach
The ſhip, and court a parley! Now diſcard
Your looks ferocious; in your alter'd eye
Let kindneſs beam, and ſordid intereſt wear
The maſk of mercy:—of a kinder fate,
Of fruitful ſhores, in early proſpect ſpeak;

And let the ſound of freedom, drop like balm
Upon their wounded feelings.—Hear they not?—
—They hear and ſpurn the treachery.—High they raiſe
Their arms, abhorrent of the chains they bear;
And ſink indignant midſt the rolling waves.

Immortal FREEDOM! vivifying fun
Of every virtue!—when thine energies
Pervade the breaſt of man, he rears his head,
Like ſome tall plant, majeſtic, and erect,
And is what God deſign'd him.—But thy ſmile
Withdrawn, he grovels in the duſt, and ſoils
The honours of his brow.—O be it mine
To ſound aright thy praiſes! At my birth,
What, tho' the Muſes ſmil'd not, nor diſtill'd
Their dews hyblean.—O'er my infant couch,
What tho' they ſcatter'd not their fading flowers,
Yet thou waſt preſent;—thy diviner flame
Play'd round my head;—impatient of controul,
My young ſtep followed where thou ledſt the way;

And far as memory traces back my years,
My ſoul, tho' touch'd with ſocial ſympathies,
Revolted at oppreſſion.——Nymph divine!
If from the ſound of Milton's golden lyre;
Of Thomſon's Doric pipe, that pour'd thy praiſe
In one full tide of muſic; and the ſtrain
Of him, who ſick of outrage and of wrong,
Sigh'd for "a lodge in ſome vaſt wilderneſs,
"Some boundleſs continuity of ſhade,"
Thou now withhold thine audience:—hither turn
Indulgent; for tho' ſweeter ſong hath charm'd,
Yet praiſe ſincerer never met thine ear.

Recall we then the days, when from the ſhores
Of elder Greece, from Rome's imperial bound,
Burſt forth exulting Pæans. Thee they hail'd
Their patroneſs and pride: but oft their ſongs
Miſtook thy genuine glory; and prophan'd
Thy name, idolatrous.—Ah! cou'd the breath
Of incenſe pleaſe thee? or the ſound of pipes

Clamorous? whilſt wafted on the ſelf-ſame gale,
The groans of ſlaughter'd Helots pierc'd thine ears;
Or the ſhrill ſhriek of ſlaves, that unaccus'd,
Expir'd upon the rack?—For this thy wrath
Was kindled; ſoon at thy vindictive frown,
Their lofty towers, and ſtrong cemented walls,
Shook to their baſe: thine heav'nly temper'd ſpear
Struck the firm earth; and from the teeming North,
And furious Eaſt, the torrents of thine ire
Ruſh'd, ready to deſtroy. Where once thy ſmile
Bad yellow harveſts wave, and Plenty pour
Her unexhauſted horn; where once thy voice
Inſpir'd the patriot breaſt, and ſteel'd the arm
Inimical to tyrants; prieſts and ſlaves
Now people all the land; and ſqualid want
Sits on the deſert champain, and derides
The vows, that idly riſe to heaven, and aſk
Its undeſerv'd indulgence. From their fate,
Ye nations learn, that what ye free receive,
Ye freely give: and O beware the touch

Of foul domeſtic ſlavery! that inſtills
Its deadly venom thro' each ſecret pore,
And taints the vital ſource of public weal.

But why, O nymph! ſhall man's averted eye,
Whene'er thy brighter radiance ſtands confeſt,
Shrink from the blaze? What tho' thy port ſublime
Inſpire deep reverence; yet thy brow ſevere
Is temper'd mild with mercy: tho' thy frown
Turn pale the crimſon on the tyrant's cheek,
Yet not the dews of evening ſofter fall
On the parch'd verdure, than thy look benign
On all th' extended race of human kind:
Nor veil'ſt thou now the glories of thy mien
As erſt, impervious. Open is thy ſhrine;
Nor mute thine oracles; nor pour they forth
Ambiguous voices. There, thine handmaids, ſtand
The heaven-deſcended Sciences; and there
The train of Arts aſſiduous: thoſe thy name
Exalt in grateful hymns; whilſt theſe arreſt

The fleeting ſound, and give to lands remote,
And ages yet to come, the genuine ſong.
And now, the kindling nations feel the ſtrain;
And ſtarting from their lethargy, that ſeem'd
The fatal ſleep of death; exulting, hail
The day-ſpring of thine empire. Even they,
The ſons of Seine, and Loire, have thrown aſide
The flimſy covering, that but ill conceal'd
Their inward pangs; nor more, with ideot joy,
Dance to the ſound, and glitter of their chains.
Led on by thee, they learn to know their worth,
And claim the rights of men; and who ſhall dare,
When juſtice arms, and liberty inſpires,
To place a barrier to their bold career?

And ſee, the adamantine doors unfold;
And from the center of thy temple beams
A ſtrong, but temperate light; that plays ſerene
Around thine awful form. The ſong is mute,
And mute the choral ſymphonies: a pauſe

Of ſolemn ſilence, on the wondering ſenſe
Impoſes deep attention: now burſts forth
Thine energetic voice; and whilſt it thrills
Thro' every vein, the firm dilated ſoul
Feels more than mortal: all the nobler powers
Of man, are up in arms, and throng to join
Thy ſtandard; firm integrity, and truth,
And ſpotleſs honour, and impartial love,
And uncorrupted juſtice. Hear the ſound,
Ye nations! nor refuſe the ſacred ſtrain
Thro' the faint medium of a mortal tongue.

" O ſons of men! O progeny belov'd
" Of every climate, and of every hue,
" Who court the boon 'tis mine alone to give—
" —Approach, nor trembling—Lo! the prize is yours,
" Your general birthright! Nor more freely blows
" Th' impartial breath of Heaven, than I diffuſe
" My bleſſings. Why then, heedleſs of the good
" That courts you, wou'd ye quit the golden day,

" For

" For the deep gloom of ignorance; where dwell "
" A thouſand ſpectre forms, the hateful brood "
" Of fancy, when ſhe vainly ſhun'd the graſp "
" Of terror? Who that ſaw the chryſtal ſpring "
" Guſh plenteous from its ſource, wou'd turn his ſtep "
" To drink pollution from the ſtagnant pool? "
" —O ſhame to manhood! that the ſacred light "
" Of reaſon, damp'd by fear, ſhould faintly pour "
" An half-extinguiſh'd blaze! or lend its aid, "
" Whilſt avarice, and ambition, forge the chains "
" That bind the vulgar herd; who bow their necks, "
" And from obedience arrogate applauſe! "

" Yet is not man forſaken;—from the ſeats "
" Of light empyreal; where, eſtrang'd from earth, "
" Awhile my ſteps delay'd, again I come "
" The harbinger of joy. For ſince the day, "
" When Britain's ſons, inquiſitive, explor'd "
" The tyrant's warrant; and his angry frown, "
" With angry frowns withſtood; my ready aid, "

" Infus'd

" Infus'd a ſecret vigor thro' the land;
" In toils and death unconquer'd.—Thence aroſe
" That equaliz'd dominion, liberal rule,
" Where not dependant on the ſovereign breath,
" The people hold their rights; but juſt reſtraints
" Affect the whole, and leave each portion free;
" As yon bright orbs revolve their fated rounds,
" Each in its ſphere; yet feel the ſtrong controul
" Of relative dependance.—Nor ſhall ceaſe
" The fair example, till thro' Europe's bounds
" It ſpread; and wondering nations emulate
" This laſt lov'd offspring of my riper cares.

" But ah! what ſounds of ſorrow load the gale,
" And wild complaints, and burſting ſighs, and groans
" Like thoſe of parting nature?—'Tis the voice
" Of ſuffering multitudes.—And ſee, the muſe,
" —O ſight of horror! on th' aſtoniſh'd eye,
" Pours all the hated ſcene.—I ſee the hand
" Of man, againſt his brother man uprais'd,
" Wielding

" Wielding the ſhameleſs whip.—I ſee the wretch "
" Fall, and cling proſtrate round his tyrant's feet; "
" Whilſt by expreſſive geſtures,—nature's mute "
" But powerful eloquence, he vainly ſtrives "
" To mitigate his fury.—Now he quits "
" His fainting graſp!—But o'er th' atrocious deed "
" O let Oblivion wrap her deepeſt ſhade; "
" Leſt fiends look on, and bluſh, that man ſhall dare "
" So far beyond the bounds his Maker plac'd,

" And can it be? that man, by nature form'd
" Of powers ſuperior; and to whom diſclos'd
" Stands the whole order of this earthly frame;
" And ſtill more wondrous, all the wider world
" Of intellect and reaſon: from whoſe mind,
" As from a poliſh'd mirror, bright reflect
" On their divine original, the forms
" Of virtue, truth and beauty:—ſay, can he
" Allow the miſt of intereſt, to obſcure
" Thoſe truths, elſe obvious to his piercing eye?

" —Ah knows he not, that partial bliſs depends "
" On general happineſs; that when he plants "
" In nature's breaſt a dagger, every part "
" Partakes the anguiſh? that the copious ſtream "
" Of univerſal bliſs, devolves along "
" Like ſome broad river, thro' its wide extent, "
" To every nation, and to all mankind, "
" Diffuſing health and gladneſs; but detach'd "
" In partial channels, ſtagnates in its courſe, "
" And foul and putrid ſpreads corruption round.

" —Yes—he ſhall learn.—A beam of light divine
" Diſpels the gloom. From its purſuing blaze,
" Swift to the confines of their native hell,
" Retire the foes of man.—There ſlavery clanks
" Her broken chains; there Cruelty his knife,
" Tho' foul'd with blood, aims harmleſs; Avarice there
" Sighs o'er her fancied loſs; her brittle web,
" There Sophiſtry bewails:—on earth, reſounds
" The voice of gratulation: realm to realm,

" And ſhore to ſhore re-echoes with my name ;
" And to the mercy-ſeat of God, aſcends
" The odour of a grateful ſacrifice,
" Of truth, and juſtice, and unbounded love."

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END OF PART SECOND.

" And learn to flatter treacherous pleasure;
" And to the mercy-seat of God, ascends
" The odour of a grateful heart:
" Of truth, and justice, and unbounded love."

END OF PART SECOND.